

Q2 Write a note on the meaning and foundational concepts of "feminism"?

1) Introduction

"feminism is the ability to choose what you want to do."

Nancy Reagan

feminism is a social and political movement that sorts to achieve equal rights, opportunities, and treatment. It seeks to challenge and change societal norms, structures, and attitudes that contribute to gender-based discrimination.

1.1) Origin and Evaluation of the Term

"Feminism": The term 'feminism' itself originated from the French word 'feministe' in the 14th-century (1871). Initially, it was used either as a medical term to describe the feminisation of male body or to depict women with masculine traits. At the same time, Alexander D.F. in 1872 observed women adopting supposedly masculine traits, gradually evolving to represent a political stance dictated to reshape the social standing of women, often referred to as virilization of women.

1.3) Development of feminist Movements in different

Countries: The term feminism was first used in France as "feminisme" in 1871 and was applied

in the french language in 1872 along with netherland. This was followed by Great Britain in 1890s and the U.S.A. in 1910. These introductions marked the emergence of a global movement advocating for gender equality. However, the usage of the term was not uniform across these countries, leading to diverse interpretations and applications. For instance, in suffrage movement, UK adopted militant tactics such as hunger strikes while us adopted legal ~~tactics~~

1.4) Diverse Interpretation of Term 'Feminism':

The term 'feminism' holds contested meanings, with different writers assigning various interpretations. It has been used to describe a political movement in the us and Europe as well as a belief in gender injustices, although there is no consensus on the fixed list of injustices. So, it is important to differentiate between feminist ideas/beliefs and organized political movements. Throughout the history, ^{people} have tried to address women's injustices, even when there was limited and political activism against women's subordination. For instance, it is reasonable to ask whether Plato was a feminist, giving his view that women should be trained to rule in his book "Republic", even though he was an exception in his historical context.

1.5) From female qualities to a Movement for Gender Equality: In the mid-1800s, the

term 'feminism' was associated with the description of "the equalities of females." However, following the First International Women's Conference in Paris in 1892, a significant transformation took place. The term 'feminism' gained a traction in English to represent a socio-political movement dedicated to advocate for equal rights for women. For instance, the passage of 19th amendment in 1920, Pregnancy Discrimination Act (1978), and violence against women Act (1994) are some of the examples of the activism of feminists.

1.6) Approaches: feminism seems to involve at least two groups of claims; normative and descriptive.

a) Normative: It refers to commonly agreed upon rules that define how things should be based on what is considered right or fair. For instance, the normative expectation that both women and men should have equal opportunities in education and work reflects the idea of fairness.

b) Descriptive: It refers to highlighting the current status and treatment of women. For instance, a descriptive claim could point out the underrepresentation of women in leadership roles within certain sectors despite their qualification and competence.

1.7) Common feminist ideas: Despite disagreements among individuals who identify as feminists, there are five fundamental principles that enjoy a consensus among most feminists. They are as

Follows :

a) **Achieving equality** : Feminist thought connect concepts with actions, emphasizing the importance of striving for gender inequality equality through tangible efforts rather than only discourse-

b) **Right to self-determination** : Feminists argue that both men and women should have the freedom to live the life of their choice, if even if they challenge the societal norms. This means that if a women wants to pursue the job of a mechanic, they should be allowed to do so.

c) **Eliminating Gender stratification** : Feminists oppose both legal regulations and societal norms that hinder women's access to equal resources.

d) **Ending sexual violence and promoting sexual freedom** : Feminists argue for sexual autonomy for women and their right to legal and safe abortion and contraception.

e) **Relationship of Gender and inequality** : by exploring the relationship between gender and inequality, they try to address issues, such as discrimination, stereotypes, objectification etc.

f) **Inclusivity** : feminism just not isolate men, instead it underscores the significance of gender equality and strives to establish a fair and equitable society that benefits everyone.

Q Write about the struggle of first wave of feminism?

2.1) Introduction:

"The vote is the emblem of your equality, women of America, the guarantee of your liberty."

Carrie Chapman Catt

The first-wave of feminism marked the start of a challenging journey for women's rights and equality in a male-dominated political landscape. With a strong emphasis on women's suffrage, this movement arose in a social context where women were largely confined to domestic roles.

2.2) The Seneca Falls Convention:

The first-wave of feminism commenced with the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848, triggered by women's exclusion from the 1840 World Anti-Slavery Convention. Led by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott, the Convention introduced the "Declaration of Sentiments", firmly asserting women's equality.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men and women are created equal."

Declaration of Sentiments

Despite societal limitations around 300 attendees engaged in debates on crucial resolutions, addressing

gender equality, women's moral superiority, and behavioral expectations. This event acted as a catalyst for the women's suffrage movement, becoming a lasting focus for activists and molding the trajectory of feminist activism for many decades.

2.3) Movements that inspired the First-wave

of feminism: First-wave of feminism was deeply influenced by the active participation of women in various social movements, each laying the foundation for the attainment of gender equality. Two prominent movements that contributed to the rise of first wave of feminism were the temperance movement and the abolitionist movement.

a) Temperance movement: women played a crucial role in the temperance movement, which emerged during the late century to curtail or prohibit alcohol consumption in the United States. Through this movement women gained invaluable skills in political engagement and leadership. Temperance organizations, made during the movement, served as a training ground for navigating the political landscape.

b) Abolitionist movement: The abolitionist movement, focusing on ending slavery, gained momentum just prior to the onset of the first-wave of feminism. Many women abolitionists organized and participated in anti-slavery

Campaigns, advocating for the rights and freedoms of enslaved individuals. Prominent feminists such as Lucretia and Elizabeth Cady Stanton gave lectures on the subject, weaving together the anti-slavery cause with the larger campaign for women's rights. Feminists perceived similarities between two movements due to shared injustices against injustice, discrimination, and oppression.

2.4) Techniques and strategies used by first wave feminists: During first wave of feminism women's rights advocates employed a variety of techniques to advance their cause. Petitioning, lobbying, and lecturing were common strategies used to draw attention to the need for gender equality. The 20th Century saw the upsurge in the practice of marching as a means of asserting their rights and demands.

2.5) Organizations of the first wave of feminism: Several organizations had a significant role in pushing for suffrage and other women's right issues. Notable are as follows:

a) National Women Suffrage Association: Founded by Elizabeth C. Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, it focused on federal-level suffrage. 15th amendment passed by the Congress in 1869 only gave right to African American men the right to vote. The exclusion of women furious and even a split was created within the organization.

b) **American Women Suffrage Association (AWSA)**: founded by Lucy Stone, aimed at achieving suffrage at the state level. It emerged as a response to the split within the suffrage movement.

c) **National American Women Suffrage Association (NAWSA)**: Formed in 1890 by merging AWSA and AWSA. Led by Stanton and Anthony initially, NAWSA gained support from various groups and played a key role in the suffrage movement.

d) **National Woman's Party (NWP)**: founded by Alice Paul in 1913 as the Congressional Union for Woman Suffrage, later becoming the NWP. Employed direct tactics of such as picketing, civil disobedience, and organizing rallies, Alice Paul also introduced the **Equal Rights Amendment (ERA)** to Congress in 1923.

2.6) Major Events in First-wave / Achievements

a) **Post-civil war activism**: The end of the slavery after the civil war sparked discussion about women's rights. Women activists saw an opportunity to advocate for suffrage.

b) **women suffrage parade (1913)**: In 1913, the NAWSA organized the Woman Suffrage Parade before President Woodrow Wilson's inauguration. Over 5,000 marchers and 20 floats celebrated women's achievements worldwide, promoting the "New Women" concept of the 20th century.

c) **Passage of 19th Amendment**: The culmination of a nearly a century of

Struggle, the 19th amendment was passed by congress on June 4, 1919, and ratified in August 1920. It prohibited sex-based discrimination in voting for US citizens.

d) Challenges in the Ratification: While the 19th amendment marked a significant achievement, some states, primarily in the south initially rejected it. African Americans still faced obstacles due to Jim Crow Laws. Mississippi took over 60 years to ratify the Amendment, while Michigan and Wisconsin quickly ratified it within six days after being passed by the US senate's vote.

E) Susan B. Anthony's illegal vote (1872): Susan B. Anthony was arrested and fined for illegally voting in a Presidential election.

F) Achievements of Legal and Political Rights: Beyond suffrage, women gained legal rights such as property ownership, protection against workplace discrimination, introduction of higher education for women, and widened access to the professions especially medicine. Passage of Married Women's Property Act of 1870 to keep earnings or property acquired after marriage. Additionally, some improvements in divorced and women's child custody rights were seen. Besides, Bicycle was used as a tool which motivated women to gain strength and take on increased role in society.

"Let me tell you what I think of bicycling. I think it has done more to emancipate women than any thing else in the world. I stand and rejoice everytime I see a

women ride by on a wheel."

Susan B. Anthony

9) **Birth Control Movement:** in the same year in which Jeannette Rankin became the first woman elected to the House of Representatives, Margaret Sanger opened the first birth control clinic in direct defiance of a New York state law banning contraception distribution.

2.7) Suffrage Movements throughout the world:

i) USA.:

a) Elizabeth Miller, Lic (1st women rights paper)

b) 'National women suffrage association' and 'Revolution' paper by Stanton (1872)

ii) UK:

a) women suffrage society and WSS committee 1866

b) Society for the promotion of the women

c) "The English Women's Review" paper

d) Women's Social and Political Union by Emmeline Pankhurst (whose members, known as suffragettes, used militant tactics to agitate for women's suffrage.)

c) International Council of women.

iii) Australia:

a) Catherine Helene Spence became a President of the women's suffrage League of South Australia.

b) Vida Goldstein campaigned tirelessly from 1910 - 1917 for women's suffrage movement.

she ~~con~~ co-founded the Peace Alliance and ~~and~~ advocated for peaceful resolutions to conflicts during WWI. she established the women's

Peace Army with the goal of safeguarding young Australian men from compulsory military services during war.

d) Franchise:

New Zealand (NZ)	1892
Australia	1902
Finland	1906
Britain	for some women in 1918 for all women in 1928
United States	1920
France	1944
Japan	1946
Pakistan	1947

1.8) Important first-wave feminists:

i) **Mary Wollstonecraft**: She was a prominent figure in the first wave of feminism. Her work "A Vindication of the Rights of Women" (1792), is considered one of the foundational texts of feminist literature during the first wave.

ii) **Sojourner Truth**: Enduring the hardships of slavery until her escape in 1826, she became a passionate advocate for both the abolition of slavery and women's rights. Her unwavering dedication to these causes are evident in her speech "Ain't I a Woman?" delivered at the 1851 Women's Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio.

iii) **Elizabeth Cady Stanton**: She dedicated all her life to women's rights and suffrage. She played an important role in co-organizing the first-ever women's rights convention. She

authored multiple books addressing various aspects of women's rights issues. Her literature and activism is still inspiring feminist cause.

iv) **Lucretia Mott**: she was both abolitionist and feminist. Being raised in Quaker household, she believed in equality, she worked alongside Stanton and Anthony in the women's rights movement.

v) **Susan B. Anthony**: she met Stanton and other activists at an anti-slavery convention in 1851. She made a significant impact on the suffrage movement; the 19th Amendment is often referred to as the "Susan B. Anthony Amendment."

1.9) **Criticism**: criticism of first wave of feminism include various perspectives, some of which are;

i) **Exclusivity**: Critics argue that the first wave of feminism only focused on the rights and the concerns of white, middle-class women.

ii) **Limited Goals**: Some critics contend that the first-wave primarily concentrated on achieving women's suffrage, which, while significant, did not address broader issues of economic and social inequality.

iii) **Neglect of Intersectionality**: Intersectionality, the cognate recognition of how different aspects of identity intersect and impact an individual's experience, was not a central consideration during the first wave.

iv) **Biased language**: another criticism directed on first-wave of feminism is their use of language and arguments that can be perceived as outdated

or exclusionary when examined from a modern perspective.

Conclusion

In conclusion, first wave of feminism marked a pivotal and courageous period in the history where women collectively began to advocate for their rights. It was centered on achieving women's suffrage, which was a significant milestone. However, it had its limitations, including exclusivity and a lack of intersectionality in its approach. Despite these shortcomings first-wave laid the groundwork for the subsequent feminist movements. It acted as a catalyst for broader societal changes, leaving behind a powerful legacy that underscores the influence of activism and unwavering determination in the quest for equal rights.